

Landscaping with Native Plants

Paul Armstrong
Smiling Sun Native & Organic
Garden Center

Topics

- Soil Preparation
- Expectations
- Maintenance
- Examples

Soil Preparation

Native plants can tolerate a wide variety of soil types but there are some exceptions

By considering your soil, its structure, fertility and pH, you will be able to properly pick out your plants for any soil type.



For instance, there are some, such as the glade coneflower or rose verbena that thrive in dry, rocky soils but suffer in compost-rich soils.



Soil Preparation

Water infiltration to test soil type or Percolation Test

Dig a hole 1' deep by 8" wide and fill it with water, allow it to drain all the way, fill it again and time your results

- If water drains in a few hours select dry loving natives
- If it takes 24 hours (clay soil) to drain select wet land species
- If it takes less than 6 hours it is prime for most native plants



Soil Preparation

Test the soil

- pH level
- Macronutrients N-P-K
- Micronutrients

Need pic of
Wilting dying plant
here

Fertilize

- Do not fertilize!
 - Increases rapid growth and certain death
 - Top dressing with a small amount of compost every year
 - Allowing mulch to break down into compost
 - Using small amount of mulched leaves
- Soil sample information and forms are available at the MO Extension office

Soil Preparation

Amending the soil

- Severe clay subsoil
 - Remove the majority of unearthed subsoil from the site
 - Replace the back fill with amended topsoil
 - 75% topsoil to 25% compost
 - Eliminates air pockets
 - Reduces establishment time
- Compacted soil should be loosened with a shovel or back hoe for larger jobs
- Never fertilize

Expectations During Establishment

- If planting container plants
 - Perennials will in most cases bloom their first year
 - Quicker to establish root system in native soil
- If planting from seed
 - Can sometimes take up to three years to establish correctly
 - If planted correctly can reduce your cost greatly if planting a bigger area

Expectations during establishment

Watering in the first year is key to establishing the root system

Water plants immediately after planting

- During first three weeks water every 4 days the equivalent of about 1" of water
- In the heat of the summer increase to every three days
- After three weeks reduce to once per week
- Takes three to six months to establish roots in native soil
 - 3 to 4 months for perennials and grasses
 - 6 months for trees and shrubs

Maintenance

First year after planting

- Remove weeds as they appear
 - Hand pulling is best
 - If using a spray, horticultural vinegar is recommended
- Provide a deep watering
- Top prune perennials and grasses late April through May
 - Will reduce flowering height
 - Help to prevent flopping until the roots are well established
- In the late fall reapply mulch as needed
 - Reapplying mulch will also help to discourage re-seeding
 - Trim grasses to $\frac{1}{4}$ of normal size
 - Trim perennials to the ground

Maintenance

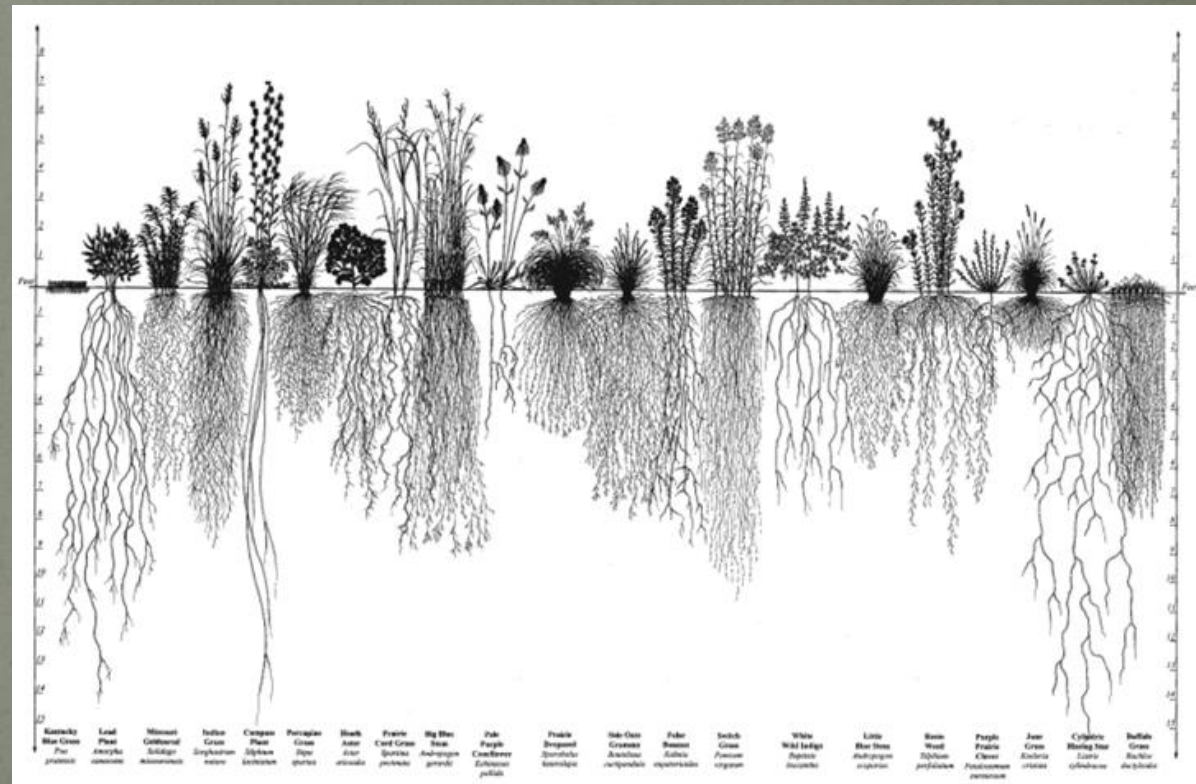
Second year after planting

- Apply mulch were needed
- Remove weeds as they appear
- Provide a deep watering as needed
 - Will not have to water nearly as much if at all
- Top prune perennials and grasses late April through May
- In the late fall reapply mulch as needed
 - Reapplying mulch will also help in allowing spreading plants to spread as much.
 - Trim grasses to $\frac{1}{4}$ of normal size
 - Trim perennials to the ground

Maintenance

Third year

- If desired look is a manicured landscape continue to top prune perennials and grasses to reduce flowering height
- Root systems will be well established by the third year



Maintenance

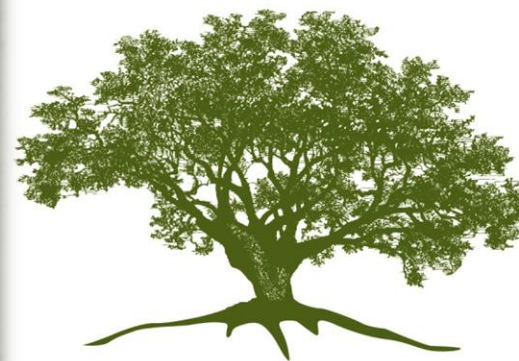
Pruning Trees and Shrubs Appearance

- Upright tree or low bushy appearance
 - Prune after the tree or shrub has bloomed or when the tree or shrub is dormant
- Lower branches may be pruned to create space
 - Garden area
 - More of a manicured appearance
- Damage due to weather
- Desired shape of the tree

Maintenance

Deadheading

- Removal of seed cones redirects plant energy into making more flower buds rather than seeds.
- Tidies the look of the perennial plant.
Foliage can still be very



SHAW NATURE RESERVE

shawnature.org

Chapter Four

Landscaping with Native Plants

A Gardeners Guide for Missouri



grownative.org

Compact Plants & Grasses



Shining Blue Star

Height: 2' - 3'

Bloom: May



Clump forming plant that
When shaped correctly will
take on a shrub like
appearance.

Use: Border plant or
naturalized area

Plants of Merit

Wild Ginger

Excellent ground cover in partial to full shade and beneath trees where other plants won't grow.

Height: 4"



Plants of Merit

Black Chokeberry

Can almost be grown in any soil type, dry to very wet. Full sun or partial shade.

Height: 5 to 7 ft.

Use:



Plants of Merit

Fringe Tree

Height: 10'-15'

Blooms May – June

Uses: As a shrub or
trim the bottom branches
to make a small tree.

Will grow well in
dry clay soil.



Hydrangea



Slender Mountain
Mint

- The next several slides should be examples of landscaping ideas and projects completed to show the variety of designs that can be accomplished



AUG 5 2010



JUL 13 2006



APR 26 2006



All photos: Judi Brooks

